

What Does Meditation Do For Me?

- It relaxes the muscles of your body.
- It reduces stress & tension.

Step One

- Either relax in a comfortable chair or lay flat on the floor or on your bed.
- Progressively relax the muscles of your body. Starting at your feet and working up or starting at your head and working down.
- Make sure to keep your breathing even. When you relax your muscles, you are releasing adrenaline and other stress hormones from them and exhaling it to release it from your body.

Step Two

- As you begin to relax, be mindful of where your muscles ache, where they are stiff or sore and pay attention to those areas and coax your muscles to relax. You may need to adjust your position in order to relieve strain on certain body parts that are sensitive or sore.
- Be aware of your breathing. Breathe gently in so that your lungs fill as completely as possible and your belly rises and falls with each breath.
- Mindfully relax any muscles which have become tense again.

Do this as you notice the tightness recurring until your whole body is relaxed.

Step Three

- Once your body is relaxed, let your mind drift. Acknowledge any thoughts that cross your mind and let them drift on. Do not focus on them or judge them, just let them drift out of your mind.
- Once your whole body and mind are relaxed, remain this way for a few minutes and savor the moment!

Finishing Up

- When you are ready to end your session, slowly rouse yourself.
- Move slowly and quietly to your belly and allow your body to regain its balance before rising.
- Do not jump up rise from your relaxation as you may become dizzy and unbalanced. Savor the moment.

The more often you meditate and engage in muscle relaxation, the faster your body will learn to respond to releasing its stress and tightness. Once relaxed, you may add guided imagery to your relaxation and use it to further relax and release stress.



What Is Guided Visualization?

- It is a form of relaxation that allows your mind to create a stress free, beautiful place for you to mentally visit and to escape the stress and chaos of the world around you!
- It helps your thought process slow down so you can focus on one image or one thing at a time.
- It allows you to focus on positive thoughts.



What Are The Benefits Of Guided Imagery?

- Reduce stress & anxiety.
- Decrease pain.
- Enhanced sense of self control.
- Decrease the level of cortisol (a stress hormone).
- Enhance sleep.
- Improve quality of life.

Guided Imagery Also Helps To:

- Decrease heart rate blood pressure.
- Decrease breathing rate.
- Increase oxygen consumption.
- Regulate body temperature.
- By replacing negative thoughts and images with positive images, may slowly replace the negative images all together.

How Do I Do Guided Visualization?

- Once your muscles are relaxed and your mind begins to clear, begin to think of a place that is visually appealing to you such as a meadow, lake, beach, forest, etc.
- It may be a special place from your past or it may be a wonderful place you make up in your mind.
- You may use a piece of gentle background music, some favorite instrumental music such as jazz or classical, or music especially designed for relaxation.
- The purpose of this is to block out the external environment and allow you to focus inward.
- The imagery may include other people who are special to you - such as loved ones or those who have passed and that you miss.
- You may include people in your imagery who have simply crossed your path in positive ways such as someone who smiled at you in a store or who has been helpful to you in some small way. Think of how these people enhanced your life simply by crossing your path.
- You may paint the image any way you desire as to the level of detail and complexity. Just don't get wrapped up in the image and miss the relaxation!
- Use all of your senses in painting the image. How does the sky look? Can you hear birds singing or

peoples voices? What do the textures of the image feel like?

Closing the Imagery

- When you are ready to return to reality, begin to gradually end the imagery by walking back the way you came in the image.
- Say good bye to those people you may have encountered in the image.
- Slowly rouse yourself to wakefulness.



Where can I get additional help?

- Fleet & Family Support Center/MCCS
- Naval Medical Center San Diego
<http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcsd/Patients/Pages/MedicalServices/MentalHealthServices.aspx>
- Military One Source
1-800-342-9657
www.militaryonesource.mil
- NMCPHC Health Promotion and Wellness
<http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcpbc/Pages/Home.aspx>



Relaxation Basics

